



# Weill Cornell Medicine Center for Human Rights

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## Statistics

- As of January 2019, the WCCHR has conducted **510** evaluations for **440** clients from **71** countries. **152** clients or **95%** of the cases that have been adjudicated have already been granted asylum or another form of protection.

## Upcoming Events

- Annual Spring Training on Saturday March 16th, 2019 for clinicians and students to learn how to provide forensic medical evaluations for asylum seekers.

## New York Student Run Free Clinic Conference

On January 27, 2019, multiple WCCHR board members attended the New York Student Run Free Clinic Conference. The theme of this year's conference was "Free Clinics as Safe Spaces for Vulnerable Populations" and was held at the Roy and Diana Vagelos Education Center. WCCHR is just one of many clinics in the NYC Metro area that work to provide free services for those who need them the most. The conference highlighted issues that are particularly relevant to immigrant health under our current administration, and focused on facilitating inter-institutional research collaborations, tailoring clinic services to the needs of the community, taking sexual history, and learning to identify domestic violence.



## Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights Debriefing



On January 10th, WCCHR held a debriefing session for all of its members who had conducted an evaluation this past year. This session was led by Dr. Shaun Nanavati, who conducts research in neuroscience and the interplay between mindfulness and the nervous system. Dr. Nanavati is also a leader of the Mindforce Institute, a Mensa Retreat Center in upstate NY, and has a background in Eastern philosophy and world religion. This event brought his areas of expertise together as he led students through various grounding, imaging, and meditative techniques. Although highly rewarding, working with asylum seekers through WCCHR can be emotionally and mentally difficult. The ability to debrief with Dr. Nanavati offered a wonderful opportunity for the members to come together and support one another.

### In the News...

#### **U.S. to Begin Blocking Asylum Seekers From Entering Over the Mexican Border (January 24, 2019)**

“The Trump administration said Thursday that it would start blocking a small number of asylum seekers from entering the United States from Mexico, using the San Ysidro border crossing near San Diego as the first location to turn back immigrants applying for refugee status.”

“Immigrants rights groups are expected to challenge the move in court and they are likely to argue that forcing asylum seekers to wait in Mexican border cities puts them at greater risk in a region known for its higher murder rates. That will force the Mexican government to create a system for processing, housing, and protecting the asylum seekers who would now congregate on their side of the border.”



*Photo credit: Rebecca Blackwell/Associated Press*

**Link to article:** <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/24/us/politics/migrants-blocked-asylum-trump.html?module=inline>

## Spotlight on...

### Dora Chen

Dora Chen graduated from Princeton University in 2017 and is currently a first-year medical student. After assisting in her first clinical evaluation, she grew curious about the ins and outs of the WCCHR and joined in the fall as the Monitoring and Evaluations Coordinator. She is interested in quality improvement research and thinking about the language we use to craft narratives around asylum seekers. She's currently considering a specialty in radiology or oncology but this may change; as an M1, she's still trying to figure whether she's a stethoscope-around-the-neck person, or a stethoscope-in-the-pocket person.



### Dr. Deborah Ottenheimer OB/GYN, Primary Care

Dr. Ottenheimer is a graduate of The Univ. of Penn and her practice focuses on adolescent and young adult health care. Additionally, Dr. Ottenheimer works as a medical volunteer in Haiti and is an active member of Physicians for Human Rights at the Icahn School of Medicine as well as the WCCHR, aiding victims of female genital mutilation, domestic violence, and sex trafficking in their applications for asylum to the U.S. Dr. Ottenheimer has lectured to medical students, residents, asylum officers, and immigration judges on FGM and other human rights violations against women and participates frequently in training seminars for asylum evaluators.

